



St. Mary's Playgroup

Promoting Inclusion, Equality and Valuing Diversity Policy

We actively promote inclusion, equality of opportunity and value diversity. All early years settings have legal obligations under the Equality Act 2010. Those in receipt of public funding also have public equality duties to eliminate discrimination, promote equality, foster good relations with individuals and groups with protected characteristics namely disability, race (ethnicity), religion and belief, sexual orientation, sex (gender), gender reassignment, age, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership. Settings also have obligations under the Prevent Duty (2015) which highlights the need to foster equality and prevent children from being drawn into harm and radicalisation.

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)

The Special Educational Needs & Disability Act 2001

The Children Act 2004

The Equality Act 2010

The Children and Families Act 2014

Prevent Duty 2015

Policy statement

At St Mary's Playgroup, we welcome each individual as a person in their own right whether child or adult. We will ensure that our service is fully inclusive in meeting the needs of all children. We recognise that children and their families come from diverse backgrounds. All families have needs and values that arise from their social and economic, ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Children grow up in diverse family structures that include two parents and one parent families; some children have two parents of the same sex. Some children have close links with extended families of grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins; while others may be more removed from close kin, or may live with other relatives or foster carers. Some children have needs that arise from disability or impairment or may have parents that are affected by disability or impairment. Some children come from families who experience social exclusion or severe hardship; some have to face discrimination and prejudice because of their ethnicity; the languages they speak; their religious or belief background; their gender or impairment.

We understand that these factors affect the well-being of children and can impact on their learning and attainment. Our setting is committed to anti-discriminatory practice to promote inclusion, equality of opportunity and valuing diversity.

At St. Mary's Playgroup we aim to promote identity, positive self-concept and self-esteem for all children through treating each child as an individual and with equal concern, ensuring each child's developmental and emotional needs are recognised and met. We encourage children to develop positive attitudes about themselves as well as to people who are different from themselves, encouraging empathy and development of critical thinking skills.

We aim to:

- Provide a secure and accessible environment in which all children can flourish and in which all contributions are considered and valued.
- Promote inclusive practice to ensure every child is welcomed and valued.



- Discuss aspects of family/child identity with parents when settling in a new child.
- Provide positive non-stereotyping information about gender roles, diverse family structures, diverse ethnic and cultural groups and disabled people.
- Maintain a positive non-judgemental attitude and use of language with children to talk about topics such as family composition/background, eye and skin colour, hair texture, sex, gender, physical attributes and languages spoken (including signing).
- Become knowledgeable about different cultures, and individual subjective perceptions of these and reflect them imaginatively and creatively in the setting to create pride, interest and positive self-identity.
- Discuss similarities and differences positively without bias and judgement.
- Celebrate and value a wide range of cultural, religious and community events and experiences.
- Provide books with positive images of children and families from all backgrounds and abilities. Avoiding caricatures or cartoon-like depictions, and ensuring individual differences are portrayed with sensitive accuracy. The central characters in individual stories should provide a positive, broad representation of diversity e.g. disability, ethnicity, sex and gender, age and social backgrounds. Individual storylines should contain a range of situations which are easily identifiable by children such as those that include disabled children/adults, different ethnic groups, mixed heritage families, gender diversity, single sex/same and different sex families, multi-generational households and cultural diversity.
- Provide visual materials, such as posters and pictures that provide non-stereotypical images of people, places and cultures and roles that are within children's range of experience.
- Ensure that toys, learning materials and resources reflect diversity and provide relevant materials for exploring aspects of difference, such as skin tone paints and pens.
- Develop a range of activities through which children can explore aspects of their identity, explore similarities, differences and develop empathy.
- Help children to learn about a range of food, and of cultural approaches to mealtimes and eating and to respect differences among them.
- Provide activities about real celebrations such as new babies, weddings, cultural and religious events
- Provide a variety of musical instruments for children to use to create a range of music.
- Provide 'dressing up' materials which promote non-gendered roles and enable children to explore different gender identities/gender neutrality
- Provide dolls that sensitively and accurately portray difference such as disability and ethnicity
- To have conversations which explore unfamiliar objects to help foster an understanding of diversity and identity such as spectacles or hearing aids

Valuing diversity in families.

- We welcome the diversity of our community and work with all families.
- We encourage children to contribute stories of their everyday life to the setting.
- We encourage families/carers to take part in the life of the setting and to contribute to whatever degree they choose or are able to.
- For families who speak languages in addition to English, we will develop means to ensure their full inclusion



Fostering positive attitudes and challenging discrimination.

- Young children are learning how to grow up in a diverse world and develop appropriate attitudes. This can be difficult, and they may make mistakes and pick up inappropriate attitudes or just get the 'wrong idea' that may underlie attitudes of 'pre-prejudice' towards specific individuals/groups. Where children make remarks or behave in a discriminatory or prejudice way or make inappropriate comments that arise from not knowing facts, staff should explain why these actions are not acceptable and provide appropriate information and intervention to reinforce children's understanding and learning.
- Where children make overtly prejudice or discriminatory remarks they are dealt with as above, and the issue is raised with the parents.
- When children wish to explore aspects of their identity such as ethnicity or gender, they should be listened to in an understanding and non-judgemental way.
- Parents are expected to abide by the policy for inclusion, diversity and equality and to support their child in the aims of the setting.

Implementing equality

- We aim to ensure that there are no barriers to inclusion of any child, families and visitors to the setting.
- Our environment is as accessible as possible for all visitors and users. We will make reasonable adjustments to accommodate the needs of disabled children and adults ensuring that the children have equality of access to learning.
- We aim to make adjustments to the environment and resources to accommodate a wide range of learning, physical and sensory impairments.
- Early years settings in receipt of nursery education funding are covered by the public sector equality duty. These bodies must have regard of the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity, foster good relations between disabled and non-disabled persons, and publish information to show their compliance with the duty.

Promoting dynamic and balanced mixed gender, culturally, socially, and linguistically diverse staff teams who work constructively together in providing for diverse communities.

- It is recognised that members of staff in diverse teams bring a range of views and opinions to the setting regarding a range of issues to do with the job.
- When recruiting staff, we welcome applications from all who apply. We believe St. Mary's Playgroup should reflect the differences found in society.
- It is important that a range of views and perspectives are shared and respected in staff meetings and that decisions are made on which way of looking at the situation will result in the best outcomes for the child.
- Staff respect similarities and differences between each other such as ability, disability, religious and personal beliefs, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment etc. Staff do not discriminate or harass individuals on the grounds of these or encourage any other member of staff to do so; evidence of such will be dealt with by management immediately.
- Members of staff of both sexes carry out all tasks according to their job description; there are no jobs that are designated men's or women's jobs.
- Staff are sensitive to the fact that male workers are under-represented in the early years workforce so may be more likely to experience inequality and discrimination.



- Staff should be aware that male workers may be more vulnerable to allegations. Therefore, work practices should be developed to minimise this. These practices are valuable for all staff.

Jane Bates is the Playgroup's named Equal Opportunities coordinator; she is responsible for recording any incidents of negative attitudes and behaviour and for bringing them to the attention of all staff.

Supporting children to become considerate adults

- Children's social and emotional development is shaped by early experiences and relationships and incorporates elements of equality and British and Universal values. The EYFS supports children's earliest skills in an age appropriate way to become social citizens, namely listen and attend to instructions; know the difference between right and wrong; recognise similarities and differences between themselves and others; make and maintain friendships; develop empathy and consideration of other people; take turns in play and conversation; risk taking behaviours, rules and boundaries; not to hurt/upset other people with words and actions; consequences of hurtful/discriminatory behaviour and regulating behaviour.

British values

- The fundamental British values of democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs are already implicitly embedded in the Early Years Foundation Stage and are further clarified here based on *Fundamental British values in the Early Years* (<https://foundationyears.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Fundamental-British-Values-in-the-Early-Years-2017.pdf>)

Democracy: making decisions together

- For self-confidence and self-awareness (PSED), practitioners encourage children to see the bigger picture, children know their views count, value each other's views and values and talk about feelings e.g. when they do or do not need help.
- Supporting the decisions children make and providing activities that involve turn-taking, sharing and collaboration. Children are given opportunities to develop enquiring minds, where questions are valued and prejudice attitudes less likely.

Rule of law: understanding rules matter (PSED)

- Practitioners ensure children understand their and others' behaviour and consequence.
- Practitioners collaborate with children to create rules and codes of behaviour, e.g. rules about tidying up and ensure all children understand that rules apply to everyone.

Individual liberty: freedom for all (PSED & UW)

- Children should develop a positive sense of themselves. Staff provide opportunities for children to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and increase their confidence in their own abilities, for example through allowing children to take risks on an obstacle course, mixing colours, exploring facets of their own identity, talking about their experiences and learning. Practitioners encourage a range of experiences, allow children to explore the



language of feelings and responsibility, reflect on differences and understand we are free to have different opinions, for example in a small group discuss what they feel about transferring into Reception Class.

Mutual respect and tolerance: treat others as you want to be treated (PSED & UW)

- Staff create an ethos of inclusivity and tolerance where views, faiths, cultures and races are valued and children are engaged with the wider community.
- Children should acquire tolerance, appreciation and respect for their own and other cultures; know about similarities and differences between themselves, others and among families, faiths, communities, cultures and traditions.
- Staff encourage and explain the importance of tolerant behaviours such as sharing and respecting other's opinions.
- Staff promote diverse attitudes and challenge stereotypes, for example, sharing stories that reflect and value the diversity of children's experiences and providing resources and activities that challenge gender, cultural/racial stereotyping.

It is not acceptable to:

- actively promote intolerance of other faiths, cultures and races
- fail to challenge gender stereotypes and routinely segregate girls and boys
- isolate children from their wider community
- fail to challenge behaviours (whether of staff, children, or parents) that are not in line with the fundamental values of democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs

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